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Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Chaloka Beyani

Addendum

Mission to Ukraine*

Summary

The present report contains the findings and recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons resulting from his visit to Ukraine from 16 to 25 September 2014. The objective of the visit was to examine the human rights situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) following the political upheavals and conflict that have affected, in particular, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the eastern regions of Luhansk and Donetsk.

The Government of Ukraine must exercise primary responsibility, rapidly establish more effective systems and step up its efforts to meet the needs and protect the human rights of IDPs. Many fled their homes with few possessions, and thousands remain housed in temporary facilities, reliant on humanitarian assistance. Civil society, churches and volunteers are making heroic efforts, supported by United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations. However, their capacity and resources are stretched thin and require stronger intervention by government authorities working in close cooperation with them. In view of the lack of comprehensive data on the number, location and needs of displaced persons, full registration and profile of IDPs, including needs assessment, is essential. All registration procedures should be harmonized, and IDPs provided with the necessary documentation to access essential services, pensions, benefits, employment and

* The summary of the present report is circulated in all official languages. The report itself, which is annexed to the summary, is circulated in the language of submission and in Russian only.

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livelihood opportunities, and to vote.

Ukraine is urged to learn from the experiences of similar IDP situations in other countries where internal displacement has become protracted. It should quickly put in place vital policies, frameworks, support structures and programmes to move towards a situation in which protection and assistance are linked to durable solutions.

Taking into account the limited capacity and resources of the Government of Ukraine to adequately address the IDP situation, the international community is urged to assist with immediate support for humanitarian responses and to provide longer-term development assistance for reconstruction efforts.

Annex

[English and Russian only]

Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons on his mission to Ukraine (16–25 September 2014)

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I. Introduction

1. In accordance with his mandate under Human Rights Council resolution 23/8 and at the invitation of the Government of Ukraine, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Chaloka Beyani, conducted an official visit to Ukraine from 16 to 25 September 2014. The objective was to examine the human rights situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) following the political upheavals and conflict that have affected, in particular, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the eastern regions of Luhansk and Donetsk.

2. The Special Rapporteur met senior government officials with responsibilities relating to IDPs including senior representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Regional Development, and Construction and Housing; the First Deputy Head of the State Service for Migration; the Head of the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights; members of the Presidential Administration; the Ombudsperson; the Head of the Kharkiv regional department of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine; representatives of the Lugansk regional state administration; Governors of Donetsk, Dnepropetrovsk, Kharkiv, and Zaporizhzhya; and the former head of the Crimean Tatar Mejlis (Council of Representatives), Mustafa Dzhemilev.

3. The Special Rapporteur met numerous civil society representatives, IDPs, volunteer and church groups, and members of the international community. He thanks all of those who met with him and provided essential information to inform his visit and report. He particularly acknowledges the excellent support provided by the United Nations and especially the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU), and the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees.

4. He shared his preliminary findings with the Government and via the media, and appreciates the willingness of government officials to continue to cooperate with his mandate to guarantee the rights of IDPs.

II. Context of internal displacement in Ukraine

5. Following the Euromaidan protests and mass demonstrations against President Victor Yanukovych and his suspension of a European Union Association Agreement in late February 2014, the Government was ousted following significant violence in the capital, Kyiv, and other regions. An interim government was formed and met with counter-protests in some regions, notably Donetsk, Luhansk and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea—regions with a high proportion of ethnic Russians—on the grounds that, inter alia, it allegedly included far-right and nationalist Ukrainian elements seeking to restrict the rights of minorities, including their language and cultural rights. The activities of pro-Russian separatists escalated in February and early March in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, with protests against the Kyiv Government and with heavily armed groups, frequently without insignia, occupying key buildings and strategic locations and confronting Ukrainian military personnel with overwhelming force. The self-proclaimed authorities called a so-called "Referendum" on 16 March 2014, following which they claimed to have over 96 per cent support for joining the Russian Federation.[1]

[1] On 27 March 2014, the General Assembly established in its resolution 68/262 that the referendum "had no validity" and upheld the territorial integrity of Ukraine, including Crimea.

6. March and April 2014 saw an increase in protests and the occupation of strategic buildings by armed groups in several cities and towns in eastern Donetsk and Luhansk regions. In response, on 15 April, the Government initiated an anti-terrorist operation. Over the following weeks violent actions by armed groups escalated dramatically and they declared the so-called "Peoples Republic of Donetsk" and "People's Republic of Luhansk" and called "referendums" in May on the future status of those territories. Separatist leaders subsequently announced that, in Donetsk, 89 per cent of voters had opted for self-rule, and that, in Luhansk, the figure was 96 per cent. Sporadic violence escalated into full-scale armed conflict in some regions. At the time of the Special Rapporteur's visit, over 3,600 people had been killed since April 2014.

7. The number of IDPs had dramatically increased since early June 2014, with displacement from Luhansk and Donetsk regions accounting for the vast majority. Data provided by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) during the visit and compiled from registrations at the regional level by the State Emergency Service and other bodies, officially showed 310,264 IDPs in Ukraine.[2] Those from the Autonomous Republic of Crimea accounted for 17,308, with those from the East numbering 292,956. The Government does not register the ethnicity of those displaced; however, they include ethnic Ukrainians and ethnic Russians, indigenous Tatars and persons belonging to minority groups. There is a disproportionate number of women, children and older persons among those displaced. Men may remain behind to protect property, or resist registering for reasons such as to avoid conscription into the military. All entities concurred that the actual number of IDPs could be up to three times the official registered figure.

8. Despite a ceasefire agreement signed in September 2014, hostilities have continued, thereby creating additional displacement. The possibility that the hostilities in the eastern Donbas region will be prolonged and result in further large-scale displacement cannot be discounted. The Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine highlighted[3] that, since the ceasefire had begun, between 6 September and 6 October, at least 331 fatalities had been recorded, although some may have occurred prior to the ceasefire. Continued hostilities mean that displacement, initially seen as a temporary measure by the Government and those affected, is becoming longer term, with serious implications for the responses required.

9. The Special Rapporteur was informed by national and regional authorities that they had been taken by surprise by events and the large numbers of IDPs and that they lacked experience in responding. They consistently emphasized that the crisis and resulting mass internal displacement was a result of, and had been fuelled by, aggression by the Russian Federation and its direct and indirect support for armed opposition groups in the affected regions. Government sources emphasized that resolution of the current hostilities and safe return to their homes for IDPs was contingent upon an end to external support to armed opposition groups.

Autonomous Republic of Crimea

10. The Special Rapporteur was unable to gain access to the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, while remaining guided by General Assembly resolution 68/262 of 27 March 2014 upholding the territorial integrity of Ukraine. He was unable to consult with any entities or communities in Crimea or to assess the situation relating to the conditions leading to displacement, or which might result in future displacement. In Kyiv he met civil society

[2] Data released by the State Emergency Service suggests that, as of 2 October, there were 375,792 officially registered internally displaced people in Ukraine.

[3] See www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=15143&

organizations supporting IDPs from Crimea, and the former head of the Mejlis, Mustafa Dzhemilev. Officially, some 17,000 people have left the territory to date; however, actual numbers are higher owing to some not officially registering with the authorities. The territory has become a displacement destination for some, mostly ethnic Russians, who had fled the Donbas region on account of the armed conflict. The situation of IDPs is difficult to assess owing to a lack of access for the United Nations to the region.

11. Those IDPs from the Autonomous Republic of Crimea include ethnic Ukrainians, Crimean Tatars, ethnic Russians and members of other minority ethnic and religious groups as well as mixed families, asylum seekers and foreign nationals formerly resident in Crimea. Numerous factors have influenced their decision to leave and include intimidation and the threat of violence, citizenship issues and pressure to acquire Russian Federation passports and forfeit their Ukrainian ones; and economic and social factors. Ethnic Ukrainians may face intimidation and abuse, for example if using the Ukrainian language in public or being critical of pro-Russian authorities. Some politically active individuals, including leaders of the Mejlis, were banned from re-entering the territory on the grounds of their activities and criticism of the de-facto authorities.

12. According to the Government of Ukraine, several Ukrainian citizens (Ukrainian filmmaker Oleh Sentsov, Oleksandr Kolchenko, Oleksiy Chirniy and Gennadiy Afanasiev) were arrested in Crimea and illegally transferred to the Russian Federation. The Russian Federation authorities have reportedly rejected requests from the Government of Ukraine to release them. These Ukrainian citizens, who are charged with terrorism and, according to the Government of Ukraine, have been tortured and humiliated in Russian detention facilities, have not been granted a meeting with the Ukrainian consular officer.

13. Interviews conducted by UNHCR and the the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) indicate that those displaced from the Autonomous Republic of Crimea have lower expectations of return to their homes in the near future than those from the conflict-affected eastern regions. Because of the circumstances and situation leading to their displacement, those from Crimea were generally better prepared, took more belongings and finances for a potentially protracted displacement and may have had greater opportunities to arrange accommodation with relatives or friends than those from the conflict-affected eastern regions. Some decisions to leave may have been based on broader political, social and personal criteria rather than to avoid violence and, consequently, for some IDPs there was an understanding that prospects for return in the short- to medium-term were slim.

III. Frameworks for providing protection and assistance to internally displaced persons

A Legislation

14. In consultations with the Special Rapporteur, all stakeholders stated that legislation on IDPs was amongst their highest priorities, providing a much-needed legislative basis and framework for the protection of their rights and assisting the relevant authorities to swiftly put in place urgently required policy and programme measures. At the time of the visit, draft texts of an IDP law had been prepared that broadly conformed with international

standards.[4] On 20 October 2014, the Law on the Rights and Freedoms of Internally Displaced Persons was adopted by parliament.

15. The law extends a specific set of rights to IDPs, providing protection against discrimination, forcible return and assistance with any voluntary returns. The law also simplifies access to different social and economic services, including social and unemployment benefits and residence registration, required for accessing banking services and registering a business. The adoption of this law requires the Government to start developing an integrated IDP policy. The law will assist the Government in its engagement with international partners and donors and establishes a clear legal framework providing for humanitarian response.

16. Prior to adoption of the law, on 1 October, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted resolutions on the registration of IDPs and on financial assistance for acquiring temporary housing. The resolution on registration provides that the Ministry of Social Policy will take the lead in organizing registration, maintaining a unified database of IDPs, and issuing them a standard certificate. The Ministry of Social Policy is working with UNHCR and experts from Georgia on developing tools for registration and data collection, based on the Ministry's existing system for processing social benefits. UNHCR has shared its experience and suggestions regarding registration. The registration exercise is scheduled to start in mid-October. The resolution on financial assistance allows able-bodied adults to receive a tax-exempt monthly subsidy of UAH 442 (US$ 34) if they are actively seeking employment or have found employment in displacement locations. Those who are not able to work (i.e. children, the elderly and the disabled) will receive a monthly subsidy of UAH 884 (US$ 68) for six months.[5]

17. The financial costs of addressing the challenges of internal displacement are considerable and are largely falling on regional authorities, which have to use existing budgets earmarked for other activities. Regional authorities consistently raised concerns that their financial resources were inadequate to support the immediate or longer-term needs of IDPs. They underscored that they were hampered in their provision of services to IDPs by legal requirements under which their budgets and financial allocations fell. They urged the immediate adoption and implementation of legislation on IDPs, to create the necessary national legal and budgetary frameworks upon which to base their activities in support of IDPs and call upon additional financial resources.

18. In May 2014, the Government had adopted the Law on the Rights and Freedoms of Citizens and the Legal Regime on the Temporarily Occupied Territory of Ukraine, which established a legal framework relating to the occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and persons who had left that region of Ukraine. The Law regulates such issues as freedom of movement between Crimea and areas under the control of the Government of Ukraine, transit documentation and replacement of identity papers, access to unemployment benefits, and the right to vote. The law does not refer to other territories, since the events in the Donbas region took place after the passing of the law. It was noted that legislation on internal displacement should be harmonized to ensure that there were no undue differences in treatment for those from Crimea and those from other regions.

[4] The Special Rapporteur recommends that consideration be given to amending certain features of the law. Criteria stipulating that IDPs must be citizens of Ukraine do not conform to international standards, under which resident non-citizens may also be IDPs.

[5] Exchange rates at the time of the visit.

B. Registration, data and needs assessment

19. At the time of the Special Rapporteur's visit there was no unified, coordinated national registration system for IDPs in Ukraine. Registration was undertaken at a regional level by the State Emergency Service and some non-governmental service providers, which were each developing their own systems. However, while some registration systems seemed to be efficiently run and managed via sophisticated computer software, others appeared to be based on paper records or left to volunteer service providers, who record those to whom they provide assistance on an ad-hoc basis.

20. Registration and issues relating to documentation is frequently a challenge for States responding to displacement situations and this is no less the case in Ukraine. It is imperative for all the relevant national bodies to achieve accurate data on the number, location and status of displaced persons as soon as possible and to establish a secure and complete database on IDPs. At the time of the Special Rapporteur's visit, there were no accurate statistics on the numbers and profile of displaced persons or any adequate form of registration. Many have sought their own solutions to housing and other needs through family or other ties and have not officially registered with the relevant authorities, not seeing any benefit in registration.

21. As an important short-term step, appropriate documentation should be issued enabling access to essential service providers and services. Procedures for displaced persons to temporarily register as residents in their current locations are also necessary to enable them to avoid administrative or documentation barriers to their securing work, shelter or payment of pensions or other benefits. Coordination across government agencies should be improved to ensure assistance can be quickly provided to displaced persons, who frequently have few, if any, financial resources left and are dependent on continuing access to their entitlements.

22. The majority of IDPs are unregistered and have found accommodation with relatives or friends. While many are fending for themselves it must not be assumed that their situation is satisfactory. It is important for the authorities to understand and assess their conditions and those of families who may be hosting them, and to identify difficulties that they may be experiencing and their essential needs. All possible efforts should be made to conduct outreach and provide information to those IDPs who may be widely dispersed in private accommodation, particularly in locations estimated to have received high numbers of IDPs.

C. Preparedness structures, systems and institutions

23. The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine established an inter-agency task force in June 2014 under the Deputy Prime Minister, Volodymyr Groisman, to respond to the developing crisis. The Ukrainian State Emergency Service (SES), the government entity in charge of protecting the population and territory from any emergency situations, was tasked to lead the humanitarian response, while the Ministry of Social Policy functions as a Ministry-level focal point for IDP issues and the direction and coordination of assistance at regional levels. A new government coordination agency is envisaged, to take overall responsibility for IDP issues, but was yet to be established. The regional visits undertaken by the Special Rapporteur indicated the important role of regional governors and mayors in driving the response to internal displacement through both formal means and more informal business and other contacts. Civil society and volunteer groups frequently described government responses as ad hoc and reactive.

24. The State Emergency Service is playing an important, front-line role in receiving, registering and referring IDPs to other service providers. The Special Rapporteur consulted senior members of the Service as well as those conducting registration and other functions in direct contact with IDPs in locations including Kharkiv, Mariupol and Zaporizhzhya. In Mariupol and Zaporizhzhya, he visited reception and registration centres which were well organized and efficiently run and in which a registration and needs assessment process was under way. Such centres provided a stamped document indicating official registration as an IDP, which was then required to be produced at a later stage for various forms of assistance.

25. The State Emergency Service deserves praise for its efforts and accomplishments to date. Nevertheless the Service is required to take on a role which is beyond its normal functions, experience and responsibilities. Its staff and resources should be returned to their normal duties as soon as possible and replaced by specialist reception and service teams. It was evident that an important function of Emergency Service staff was as a first-contact and information point. Thereafter new arrivals would be put in contact with a range of non-governmental and volunteer service providers.

26. The State Migration Service, the executive body responsible for migration management, has been contributing to the management of the humanitarian response to the crisis and has a potentially important role in assisting individuals to obtain new residential registration documents. However, laborious procedures and long delays were reported by some of those seeking to re-register their residence documents or receive new or duplicate documents.

D. The role of volunteers

27. The Special Rapporteur met volunteers working with Crym SOS and Kharkiv Station, and others providing services in receiving areas he visited. They are doing heroic work and selflessly dedicating their time to assisting IDPs. Many are young people, students, some IDPs themselves, and even some with full-time jobs who assist in their spare time. Volunteers consistently expressed the need for greater support from the Government. It was evident that in collective accommodation centres the majority of those providing assistance were unsalaried volunteers who performed a range of necessary functions, including administration and registration, liaison with other service providers, provision of information, sorting and distribution of food, clothing and other provisions, cooking, cleaning and a range of other tasks.

28. Despite their tireless efforts, the pressures that volunteers are facing are immense. In many locations the Special Rapporteur witnessed long queues in corridors and in dilapidated reception centres as well as at food and clothing distribution points. Volunteers and United Nations staff members in one location noted that piles of donated clothes could not be distributed because volunteers to sort them were lacking. Volunteers described long working hours to assist those in need and the continuing inflow of new arrivals requiring assistance. The onset of winter placed increasing demands upon volunteers, while the conditions under which they worked became more challenging.

29. The continuing reliance on volunteers is unsustainable and alternative staffing solutions should be found that take into account the possibility of further displacement flows from armed conflict-affected areas and the realization that displacement is becoming protracted. Current volunteers may need to seek paid employment or return to their regular jobs or studies, or may otherwise become unavailable, sometimes as a consequence of the stress and workload that they are experiencing. Grants or other forms of short-term employment contracts for volunteers should be considered, to compensate them and ensure that they are able to continue their assistance if they are not otherwise employed. In view of

parliament resolutions providing monthly payments to IDPs this may be particularly appropriate.

IV. Critical humanitarian and human rights challenges

30. The Special Rapporteur directly consulted IDPs on their situations in all regions that he visited. At the time of his visit, in the Kharkiv region they were mostly accommodated in private houses and apartments, while there were 12 collective accommodation centres. In western parts of Donetsk region, which are under government control, they were mainly housed in summer camps and in rented houses and apartments. In northern and western parts of Luhansk region they were mostly in private houses and apartments, with a relatively small number housed in summer camps and other collective accommodation centres.

31. Numerous individuals described the circumstances under which they had fled. Some were visibly traumatized as they described regular indiscriminate shelling of their areas and the destruction of their homes. Some described witnessing people killed and injured, and having to endure periods of fear and uncertainty. Many had left with only what they could carry to reach places of safety and in the hope of a quick return to their homes. For many, their financial resources have been exhausted and they rely on humanitarian assistance for all their shelter, food and other needs. Lack of payment of pensions or other financial benefits or difficulties accessing bank accounts were common problems.

32. The Special Rapporteur visited a collective accommodation centre near Kyiv run by the Protestant Church Union, with support by UNHCR. Approximately 196 people, including 44 children, were housed in a hangar without external walls, in a former industrial facility. Rows of bunk beds were arranged in close proximity and separated by blankets or tarpaulins. Families and individuals were allocated sleeping space, with specific areas provided for families. A kitchen and eating area and play area were provided outside and washing and toilet facilities were also available close by. Services and funds were provided by volunteers and donations of food, clothes and toys were being made by the church and residents of Kyiv. No heating was installed and Church leaders noted that they had sought urgent meetings with authorities to highlight the problem, but expected to have to relocate residents to winter accommodation.

33. In Kharkiv, the country's second city, the Special Rapporteur visited the railway station, in which volunteers and members of the State Emergency Service have established a reception centre where new arrivals are registered, receive information, and may stay for up to two nights in disused railway carriages or station buildings. Some collective accommodation centres visited by the Special Rapporteur in Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia and Mariupol, housing hundreds of people, had basic and cramped conditions, poorly maintained buildings frequently without heating, inadequate shared bathrooms and toilets and only basic cooking or washing facilities. The Special Rapporteur was sometimes informed of building improvement plans; however volunteers consistently expressed concerns that such plans or alternative relocation of IDPs to winterized accommodation were not being implemented.

34. The living conditions and well-being of those IDPs who have not registered and who have found accommodation and support with family or friends remains difficult to assess. Nevertheless it is reasonable to assume that challenges include lack of space and facilities in family homes, shortage of food and pressure on finances. It may be the case that for some it is not sustainable to remain with family or friends for long periods and that they may need to consider alternative options, potentially further increasing the pressure on collective accommodation centres. The Special Rapporteur met families who had found

refuge in collective centres after having first stayed with relatives, citing the burden they caused to relatives as a reason for leaving.

A. Winterized accommodation

35. At the time of the Special Rapporteur's visit, the situation was particularly concerning as winter approached. The highest priority for many IDPs was winterized accommodation. Many remained housed in collective centres, summer camps, summer houses lent to them and other facilities inappropriate for winter conditions. The upgrading of such facilities or the relocation of thousands of persons to more suitable accommodation was required. The need for action was urgent and needed to be a high priority for national and regional authorities and all stakeholders. The Special Rapporteur was encouraged by meetings with regional authorities, which acknowledged the problem but expressed concerns over their ability to respond within their existing budgets and resources. They underlined the need for legislation on IDPs and central government assistance.

36. It was evident that recognition of the impending winter accommodation problem was not being matched with appropriate responses. The Special Rapporteur emphasized that identification of accommodation that was adequate for winter conditions or could be rapidly winterized was an urgent priority for all governments and international organizations. While some regional authorities stated that they had identified land for the construction of buildings and were developing plans, construction projects might not be ready to accommodate individuals for some months and it remained imperative to identify existing appropriate buildings. The Special Rapporteur visited a disused hospital in Mariupol in a poor state of repair that was identified as a potential accommodation centre. It remains necessary to ensure that provision is made for a possible increase in the number of IDPs requiring accommodation.

37. It is essential that IDPs are fully informed and consulted about the accommodation options available to them to enable them to make informed choices and consider all options. The Special Rapporteur was alerted to concerns regarding possible gas shortages over the winter months which, if not resolved, might lead to additional heating problems, particularly for the poorest and most vulnerable, including many displaced persons.

B. Food, clothing, health care and education

38. Many IDPs have exhausted their financial resources and rely on humanitarian assistance, including for their access to food. While the public response, including donations of food, has been excellent, it is likely that such donations will decrease over time and alternative sources will soon be required. One volunteer described large quantities of food being left in collection boxes early in the crisis, but stated that they were now almost empty. NGOs are overstretched and short of essential supplies. The problem of access to food is exacerbated by the onset of winter, creating new and heightened challenges relating to the supply and distribution of foodstuffs, as well as communal cooking facilities and fuel.

39. In some facilities that the Special Rapporteur visited, space considerations and available facilities required volunteers to distribute food, clothes and other assistance in outside distribution locations where people would queue, often for considerable periods. In some locations, kitchen and eating facilities were also located outside of the main accommodation buildings. Such facilities would not be viable in cold weather conditions and alternative solutions would be required to enable people to queue to obtain food

products in indoor facilities close to their places of accommodation. Equally, non-food items such as cooking sets were required.

40. Many were displaced over the summer months, with the expectation of a rapid return, and were able to carry few belongings with them. Many fled without winter clothing adequate for the harsh winter temperatures. Displaced persons and volunteers expressed concerns regarding provision of winter clothing, particularly necessary for those living in poorly heated or insulated accommodation, as winter temperatures regularly reach -20° Celsius. The elderly are highly vulnerable to the cold and require plentiful warm clothing and blankets in addition to being housed in winterized accommodation. Those from the eastern regions often left with few belongings, including clothes, owing to the urgency of their flight to avoid the conflict.

41. While it was evident that the general public had made significant donations of clothes, concern was expressed regarding the provision of suitable winter clothing, including coats and boots, as well as the shortage of volunteers to sort and distribute clothing effectively. Some initiatives to provide winter clothing were under way and effective. In Mariupol, UNHCR was working closely with local authorities and private business to ensure the provision of good quality warm children's clothing. Upon registration of families, the children's sizes required were noted, enabling local producers to meet the requirements precisely.

42. The Special Rapporteur learned that those with chronic health conditions may face difficulties in accessing care that they may urgently need. While free basic primary health care is in place in most localities, it is important to ensure that those in need of urgent medical care or with chronic medical conditions are swiftly identified and that provision is made for their treatment. Some IDPs indicated that they did not have access to essential medicines, which were not available to them free of charge. The authorities acknowledged the problem of access to medicines and noted that they were attempting to respond to needs on a case-by-case basis.

43. The provision of reproductive health care for pregnant women is a priority in terms of their access to specialist medical assistance, winterized housing and other essential services. Numerous stakeholders also noted the psychological impact of stress, trauma due to proximity to armed conflict and subsequent displacement experiences. Children may be particularly affected by their experiences. Counselling is being made available to IDPs by specialists who frequently volunteer their time to assist them. Nevertheless such services may be inconsistent or short-term in nature and a needs assessment is required to fully understand the extent of requirements.

44. The Special Rapporteur was informed that most school-age internally displaced children are able to continue their education through temporary registration in local schools at the beginning of the school year, which coincided with his visit. He considers this to be a significant and important achievement, rapidly addressing education needs and ensuring that internally displaced children do not fall behind in their studies. Nevertheless the situation should continue to be closely monitored to ensure that all internally displaced children have access to quality education. A number of challenges in the field of education remain to be addressed.

45. A shortage of kindergarten places was consistently highlighted, restricting younger internally displaced children from gaining places; however this shortfall also affects the general population. Any preferential treatment for internally displaced children may be poorly perceived by some parents. Where possible, temporary and creative solutions should be considered, which may include providing work for suitably qualified or experienced internally displaced teachers. This may, for example, enable them to establish temporary or longer-term kindergarten and childcare facilities which might also provide some income to

women and enable other women to consider part-time employment opportunities while their children are cared for.

46. Owing to the traumatic experiences of some internally displaced children, it is important to monitor their psychosocial wellbeing to ensure that necessary counselling or support is provided. Sensitivity should be exercised to ensure that internally displaced children do not face any stigmatization, bullying, discrimination or exclusion on account of their situation. In addition, internally displaced children may experience difficult circumstances and require special assistance, for example with regard to meals, clothes and school materials. It was noted that some parents were not sending their children to school, primarily on account of their expectation of a rapid return to their places of origin. Where displacement becomes longer term, all children must have access to appropriate education at all levels.

47. Those students enrolled in higher education in their places of origin are frequently unable to continue their studies in their new locations owing to shortage of places, lack of financial resources to cover fees and inability to transfer fees or scholarships from their previous education institutions. The Government, in coordination with education institutions, is urged to consider solutions to ensure that students who have paid fees or received scholarships are able to continue their studies while also ensuring that there is no unfair impact on other students, for example, resulting in their losing places owing to preference being given to IDPs. Lack of places at institutions of higher education may be a challenge to the enrolment of IDPs.

C. Employment

48. A frequently stated problem for IDPs is finding employment and income-generating opportunities. Some have had the personal and financial resources to set up small businesses or to locate work opportunities. However, several of those interviewed described barriers to employment, including problems with residence registration in their places of origin, their work records—required by prospective new employers—which are still with former employers, and discrimination when they identify themselves as displaced persons. Some described negative reactions by potential employers in relation to their situation, where they are from and the fact that they may not stay long term. Without access to employment, many will need social benefits as guaranteed by law, placing further stress on public finances.

49. Current economic conditions in some affected regions have resulted in high unemployment rates among the general population. The industrial heartland of Ukraine, in the eastern provinces, has been dramatically affected by the armed conflict. It is therefore not easy for labour markets to absorb an influx of IDPs. Those with professional or specialist skills have greater opportunities, and evidence suggests that some have found the resources to set up small businesses in relocation areas. Challenges to finding employment may be experienced by those without skills, women with young children, the elderly and those lacking the required documents. Some have not sought work owing to the uncertainty of their situation and their desire to return to their places of origin as soon as possible. Equally, some skilled workers may be reluctant to accept available low-skilled work.

50. Employment and livelihood programmes and initiatives are required for those who are unable to return to their former employers or livelihoods, or who have had their business premises damaged or destroyed.[6] Some short-term initiatives to link IDPs with

[6] According to OHCHR, some 40,000 small and medium-sized businesses in the Donetsk and Luhansk

prospective employers have begun, mostly by means of the provision of information boards in reception centres. As displacement is becoming protracted, urgent consideration of employment and livelihood initiatives must be considered, including public works programmes and construction and renovation projects that might also provide suitable short- or longer-term accommodation solutions.

D. Property rights

51. The status of property belonging to IDPs in their places of origin in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and in Luhansk and Donetsk regions is inevitably an issue of considerable concern for affected persons and authorities. The homes of many of those displaced from the east of Ukraine have been badly damaged or destroyed by shelling. Others who fled the fighting abandoned their homes and may not know whether they remain intact. It is evident from interviews conducted with IDPs that in numerous cases individuals—frequently male family members—may have remained in unsafe or occupied locations in order to protect property and belongings, potentially putting themselves at risk. Available statistics also indicate a far higher percentage of internally displaced women and children than men.

52. The Special Rapporteur was informed by a number of those IDPs and others whom he consulted that persons who had left regions that were under the control of the armed groups were beginning to receive telephone calls or messages informing them that if they did not return within a matter of days their property would be confiscated. While unconfirmed, such reports were creating concern amongst IDPs. They might lead some to return prematurely to locations that may not be safe in order to reclaim their property, potentially putting them at risk. Further unverified reports indicated that persons wishing to leave affected regions were required to register before departure and to pay bribes in order to be allowed to leave with their belongings.

53. For those internally displaced from the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, property issues are no less concerning. Uncertainty over the long-term status of the territory and the implications in terms of property rights for those who fled the region remains. NGOs representing IDPs noted that it is currently not possible to sell property, including houses and apartments or cars, in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea owing to the change in the de-facto authorities and to administrative and bureaucratic procedures not being fully operational. Some commentators report that a further flow of displaced persons may occur as such issues are resolved and those in Crimea who do not wish to stay, but who have remained to look after property, are eventually able to sell their homes.

54. For those who become permanently displaced owing to an inability or unwillingness to return to their places of origin, durable solutions will be required that should include solutions to outstanding property issues. Where property has been permanently lost, appropriate compensation based on the value of the property lost or the provision of property of commensurate value should be provided by the appropriate authorities. For those who return to their properties to find them occupied, all ownership rights are retained by the legitimate owners and the property should revert to them.

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regions have ceased activity owing to the fighting, leaving thousands without an income.

E. Particularly vulnerable groups

55. Some IDPs are particularly vulnerable and have specific medical and support needs. The Ministry for Regional Development highlights that 34,700 persons with disabilities and older persons were internally displaced as of 8 September 2014. The Special Rapporteur met some individuals with disabilities and older persons and noted their particular concerns, which included lack of access to essential medicines and to necessary specialist support. The ability of such individuals to cope in unfamiliar conditions without regular support networks is severely hampered and some whom he met were clearly distressed. A localized assessment of the needs of the most vulnerable people should be undertaken as a priority, with a view to ensuring that facilities provided fully reflect their physical and emotional needs and ability to cope.

56. Representatives of the Roma community raised concerns about the estimated 1,000 Roma displaced as of 18 August owing to the prevailing insecurity.[7] Roma reportedly face discrimination and marginalization even under normal conditions and are among the poorest in society. It was emphasized that many Roma lack documents and are therefore in a precarious position. Lack of documents hampers the ability of Roma to register as displaced persons and consequently they may face serious barriers to access to assistance including accommodation, food and clothing. Roma may be isolated, reluctant to engage with the authorities, and lack access to information about available services. The authorities must provide outreach to Roma and ensure that no discrimination exists in access to essential services for them or other marginalized groups.

F. Prevention of discrimination and stigmatization

57. The Special Rapporteur has been impressed by the level of societal support for IDPs, which has been evident through donations of food, clothing and other assistance by the general public and the work of volunteers. However, he also heard reports of some stigmatization and discrimination experienced by some individuals. It is important to address any discrimination against displaced persons and any tensions that exist before they are allowed to escalate. While the Special Rapporteur was not informed of significant tensions, he did receive some anecdotal evidence of emerging tensions between host communities and displaced persons and warned that measures should be taken to ensure that such issues do not escalate.

58. As the political situation has evolved, some described a growth in negative perceptions towards IDPs, which impacts on how those who have been internally displaced, particularly those from the east, are viewed, and could affect their integration. Some are perceived to be separatist sympathisers or unpatriotic on the basis of their places of origin, which may impact on reactions to them in host communities, and their ability to gain employment or to integrate easily into new localities. It was noted that some internally displaced men may not register officially or seek to re-register their residence status, in order to avoid conscription into the armed forces. Reactions to IDPs from the east among those who have had family members recruited into the armed forces may be particularly negative in such cases. While IDPs should abide by national laws, including conscription laws, the fact that their families are in a displacement situation, with the loss of their usual social environment, possible trauma and lack of livelihood opportunities should be taken into account by the authorities when deciding whether to enrol them for military service.

[7] UNHCR, Profiling and Needs Assessment of Internally Displaced Persons (18 August 2014).

59. Host communities or families which are already poor may find their resources severely stretched by the need to accommodate and support IDPs. Care is required to ensure that host communities or families providing shelter do not suffer shortages or other negative impacts. Where necessary they should have access to some of the appropriate support and assistance mechanisms that are available to the IDPs.

60. Personnel of regional authorities in conflict-affected areas and those displaced reported that some senior and junior officials were facing prosecution for their activities while under the de-facto authority of the self-proclaimed "Donetsk people's republic" and "Luhansk people's republic". Many officials continued to carry out their duties in areas taken over during the period. Charges, including accusations of collaboration, have been made against some officials. Officials in some eastern regions suggested that they are viewed with unjustified suspicion by the national authorities, which may impact on the support that they receive.

G. Gender issues and prevention of sexual and gender-based violence

61. Internally displaced women may face particular challenges on the basis of their gender, identity and situation of displacement. They may be vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence both during the period of displacement and in displacement destinations. Displacement may involve travel through militarized zones and checkpoints controlled by both sides, which may make women passing through them highly vulnerable to sexual violence or other forms of human rights abuse. In displacement destinations they may be separated from their spouses, or find themselves in vulnerable situations owing to the cramped conditions in which they live. Lack of financial resources may make some women more vulnerable to exploitation or trafficking, particularly those who may not have access to support mechanisms and services.

62. The Special Rapporteur notes that he was not informed of cases of sexual or gender-based violence against internally displaced women by those whom he met or the authorities and others supporting them in the various locations that might indicate a pattern or practice of violence against women. Nevertheless, the threat of such violations potentially targeting women fleeing armed conflict by combatants and armed groups or other non-combatants must be taken seriously and any incidents or allegations of such violations investigated and monitored. Many of those leaving armed conflict-affected areas have not registered with the authorities and may not have been in a position to report abuse or violence. No assumptions should be made that sexual or gender-based violence is absent.

H. Detention and filtering of internally displaced persons

63. Some reports were received regarding allegations of detention and ill-treatment of individuals, including IDPs, by armed groups in territories which they control, and personnel of the Ukrainian armed forces. Those leaving areas of conflict are required to pass through frequent checkpoints on both sides of the line of contact, during which time they may be particularly vulnerable to violation of their rights by military personnel or unidentified others manning checkpoints. Reports indicate that younger males, particularly, have been subject to detention, interrogation, theft of their property, forced recruitment into armed groups and forced labour, for example to dig trenches or other military installations. Unverified reports of enforced or involuntary disappearances were communicated to the Special Rapporteur.

64. Armed groups have been accused of arbitrary detention and ill-treatment of some considered to be Ukrainian sympathizers in the areas under their control. Those returning to

eastern regions either to remain or temporarily to regain property are vulnerable to abuse of their rights, for example at checkpoints. Equally, unverified reports suggested that Ukrainian volunteer battalions, including "Aydar", "Dnipro-1", "Kyiv-1" and "Kyiv-2", are responsible for enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention and ill-treatment of some IDPs and of "filtering" to identify those who are accused of separatist activities or sympathies. The Special Rapporteur reminded the Government and all armed groups that, under international standards, IDPs must be free from arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and ill-treatment or any violation of their rights.

V. Achieving durable solutions

65. The situation of many IDPs is likely to be protracted owing to the nature of the political and military situations in both the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and affected territories in Donetsk and Luhansk. The prospect of the situation in Donbas evolving into a "frozen conflict", under which some regions remain outside the administrative, political or military control of the Government of Ukraine is increasingly possible, and will have a significant impact on the possibility of, and desire for, return for some IDPs.

66. Reports received by UNHCR indicate that some IDPs have been returning to their places of origin, including areas regained by the Ukrainian military under its Anti-Terrorist Operation, and that others have been returning to the areas controlled by the armed groups. Precise figures were unavailable at the time of the visit. UNHCR did not recommend return to some locations owing to concerns including ongoing and indiscriminate shelling, as well as lack of infrastructure and basic necessities, such as water, electricity and food in some locations. Nevertheless some individuals return either with a view to staying permanently and reclaiming property, or for shorter periods to gather belongings such as winter clothes.

67. Some IDPs may face physical impediments to their return to their area of origin by de-facto authorities such as border or visa requirements or bans imposed on account of their political or other allegiances. While many others may not face such impediments, the political and social reasons for their initial flight may remain unresolved and include the threat or fear of persecution or violence; political affiliation and/or the desire to remain Ukrainian and not fall under another authority or be required to change citizenship; economic factors including the loss of property or employment without the prospect of compensation; and numerous other social and personal factors. Owing to the complex dynamics of nationality, territory, geopolitics and personal identity, many will be faced with a difficult equation regarding a decision to return to their former homes in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea or the affected eastern regions. Any decision to return must be entirely voluntary.

68. In view of the possible protracted displacement it is essential that government puts in place policies, frameworks, support structures and programmes to ensure durable solutions.[8] It is imperative that short-term, transitional solutions, such as temporary

[8] According to The Inter-Agency Standing Committee Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons a durable solution is achieved when IDPs no longer have any specific assistance and protection needs that are linked to their displacement, and can enjoy their human rights without discrimination on account of their displacement. This can be achieved through sustainable reintegration at the place of origin, sustainable local integration in areas where IDPs take refuge, or sustainable integration in another part of the country. IDPs who have achieved a durable solution enjoy, without discrimination: long-term safety, security and freedom of movement; an adequate standard of living, access to adequate food, water, housing, health care and basic education; access to employment and livelihoods; and access to effective mechanisms that restore their housing, land and

collective accommodation centres and modalities for the provision of food, clothing, financial support, health care and education, are not mistaken for durable solutions. If a displacement situation becomes extended, suitable housing must be provided, for example, that allows IDPs to live in dignity in accommodation appropriate to their needs and their family requirements with regard to available space, privacy, facilities and proximity to services, and employment and livelihood opportunities.

69. It is essential that Ukraine learns from the experiences of countries facing similar internal displacement challenges, such as Georgia, Azerbaijan and Serbia, in which internal displacement has become protracted and durable solutions were delayed or neglected. Lessons must be learned from such situations to help Ukraine as it puts in place the necessary frameworks, structures and programmes to address the IDP situation, and moves towards a situation in which many of those currently displaced can envisage secure and supported return to their places of origin, or other appropriate durable solutions.

VI. The role of the international community

70. The ongoing crisis and consequent humanitarian and human rights challenges are of a magnitude which is beyond the capacity of the national Government to respond to effectively. The current capacity and resources of United Nations agencies and other international and national NGOs are also stretched thin and are insufficient to respond to existing needs, let alone the consequences of possible further displacement. As winter approached, the pressure on all entities providing support to IDPs increased and they required greater support and financial resources. The international community has an important role in this respect.

71. In August 2014, the humanitarian community together with the Government issued a Preliminary Response Plan to guide the humanitarian response in the country.[9] It required US$ 33.3 million in the fields of preparedness, humanitarian response and its coordination, and national legislation to monitor the humanitarian situation, particularly in the areas affected by violence, IDP-receiving areas and the areas of potential return, and to support livelihood opportunities, basic services and reconciliation programming in post-conflict areas.

72. Immediate needs include the provision of both food and non-food items and the rapid construction or renovation of suitable accommodation in displacement locations. Longer-term assistance and reconstruction efforts are also required to enable people to return to their homes. Infrastructure projects to restore water, electricity and other essential services must also be rapidly put in place.

73. The Special Rapporteur discussed with government and United Nations officials the importance of early engagement in order to support self-reliance, livelihoods and socioeconomic opportunities for IDPs and host communities. An important initiative is a proposed European Investment Bank programme to restore the infrastructure of the areas affected by fighting and meet the urgent needs of displaced persons. Early engagement by development actors is essential and should be encouraged and replicated where required.

property or provide them with compensation.

[9] See http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ENG_Ukraine%20Preliminary%20Reponse%20plan%20-%20final%2018.08.14.pdf. See also http://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/un-funding-requirements-humanitarian-preparedness-and-response-ukraine-15-aug-31-dec.

VII. Conclusions and recommendations

General comments

74. Government representatives frequently stated that Ukraine had been taken by surprise by the crisis and the subsequent high numbers of IDPs and that they were not experienced in dealing with internal displacement situations. The numbers of those displaced had escalated rapidly as a consequence of the armed conflict and the actions of armed opposition groups and those supporting them, and of the Government's subsequent Anti-Terrorist Operation. The national and regional authorities were unprepared administratively and logistically to cope adequately with the large numbers of IDPs.

75. Hostilities in the eastern regions of Ukraine have caused massive internal displacement and untold suffering both to those displaced and to those remaining in areas affected by the hostilities. It is essential for all parties to the hostilities to bring the fighting to an end without delay, to protect civilians and to adhere fully to the provisions of peace agreements, including the Minsk Agreement of September 2014. This is critical to the prevention of further internal displacement and to ensuring the future secure return of IDPs to their homes on a voluntary basis.

76. Reaffirming General Assembly resolution 68/262, on the territorial integrity of Ukraine, measures must be taken to protect the rights of IDPs affected by the occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea.

77. Credit must be given to regional authorities that have taken effective steps to respond quickly to the situation despite limited resources. In Dnepropetrovsk, Kharkiv, Mariupol and Zaporizhzhya, the Special Rapporteur was impressed by the commitment of the authorities to meet the needs of IDPs. Nevertheless, to date the national Government's support for its regional counterparts has been inadequate and lacking in leadership. It is characterized by a reactive rather than anticipatory approach that indicates a lack of acknowledgement of the extent and probable duration of the IDP situation.

78. The budgetary resources of government bodies, in particular regional entities, are stretched far beyond their ability to respond adequately to the IDP situation. Nevertheless, to the fullest extent possible, they should focus their efforts and attention, and dedicate the necessary resources, towards the needs of IDPs who face urgent, and in some cases potentially life-threatening conditions. Urgent and substantial international assistance is required to address the issue.

Legislation

79. The Government must ensure that it complies fully with its obligations under international standards, including the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, for all those IDPs within its territories, and guarantee all their human rights without discrimination.

80. The adoption in October 2014 of the law on the rights and freedoms of internally displaced persons is welcomed, although some revisions may be required to bring it fully into line with international standards. It will enable more effective responses to the needs of IDPs, with appropriate budgets in place. Full and rapid implementation of the Law is now of paramount importance and the Government should establish a clear roadmap and implementation strategy to ensure that it takes effect without unnecessary delay.

Registration, data and needs assessment

81. **Registration procedures are currently ad hoc and inadequate to meet the needs of IDPs, creating obstacles to their access to essential assistance, provision of social benefits and residence registration, inter alia. Registration should be harmonized for IDPs, with documentation for access to essential services and the chance to gain employment and livelihood opportunities, and to vote in elections.**

82. **Noting the lack of comprehensive data on the number, location and needs of IDPs, full registration and profiling, including a comprehensive needs assessment, are essential. This should extend to the many who are unregistered and not receiving government support with regard to housing, food and other essential needs. Data should also be gathered on the needs of families and communities hosting IDPs that may be significantly affected and also require assistance.**

Preparedness structures, systems and institutions

83. **It is evident that there is no coherent coordination mechanism with, and between, national and regional administrations. Frontline services are mostly provided by volunteers, civil society and regional administration authorities, with the support of UNHCR. Registration systems are not harmonized. There is an inadequate organized response to the internal displacement situation in Ukraine.**

84. **Responsibility and coordination across government ministries, agencies and services is currently unclear and inadequate to respond effectively to the situation. Now that legislation is in place, systems, processes and institutional mechanisms should be improved to ensure that assistance can be quickly provided to IDPs, who commonly have few, if any, financial resources and are dependent on continuing access to their pensions and other benefits.**

85. **On the basis of the Law on IDPs, priorities must include: a harmonized and coordinated registration process to be used both regionally and nationally; clearly defined responsibilities for issues related to displaced persons and support for them under the general leadership of a dedicated government body; and the establishment of long-term planning and a national strategy to address the short-, medium- and long-term needs of IDPs and the need for durable solutions.**

The role of civil society and volunteers

86. **Volunteers and church-based groups are making heroic efforts around the country, supported by United Nations agencies and NGOs. Their capacity and resources are stretched thin and require stronger intervention by government authorities working in close cooperation with them. The weight of responsibility on voluntary and civil society organizations must be lifted through more direct intervention by government authorities. Specific initiatives to support their efforts, including financial assistance and the transfer of key responsibilities and services to salaried staff, should be considered.**

Winterized housing

87. **At the time of his visit, no collective accommodation facilities visited by the Special Rapporteur were appropriate for winter temperatures. Winter caused increasing hardship for many who fled with few possessions, thousands of whom were housed in such facilities. The Government must ensure as an urgent priority that appropriate accommodation, including winterized shelter where necessary, is provided for all IDPs, to alleviate the severity of the challenges. The Government**

should take every measure to ensure that no one lacks access to heated housing in which they can live in dignity.

Food, clothing, health care and education

88. Addressing urgent needs in the area of provision of food, clothing, health care and education must be a high priority for national and regional governments to ensure the health and well-being of IDPs. Provision of essential assistance cannot be left to voluntary contributions from the general public or non-governmental organizations as has been commonplace in the response in some regions to date.

89. A coordinated, government-led assistance strategy, in cooperation with regional authorities, and United Nations and other international entities as appropriate, is required to ensure that adequate food, clothing and other essential non-food items are provided in a systematic and timely manner. This is especially important in winter and for children, the elderly, persons with disabilities and other particularly vulnerable persons.

90. While primary health-care needs are being met, including psychosocial care, free access to medicines must be provided for all IDPs who lack resources. The specific health-care needs of pregnant women, the elderly and disabled persons must be given a high priority. Access to education for internally displaced children has largely been facilitated. However, specific challenges include access to kindergarten places, ensuring all children are attending school, and assisting students to find places to continue higher education courses without additional costs.

Particularly vulnerable groups

91. Specific attention should be given to the situation of particularly vulnerable groups, including the elderly, persons with disabilities, pregnant women and others who are poorly equipped to cope with displacement, distressed or vulnerable to illness. A comprehensive needs assessment should be conducted in each displacement location.

92. Particular attention should also be given to those IDPs belonging to marginalized groups or minorities such as Roma to ensure that all have equal access to assistance and support services and that no discrimination exists with regard to their seeking and gaining assistance. Lack of documentation should not be a criteria for denying assistance and pro-active outreach to such population groups should be undertaken.

Discrimination and stigmatization

93. Discrimination or stigmatization of any kind targeted against IDPs on account of their situation, identity or political or other affiliation must be addressed immediately.

Detention/filtering of internally displaced persons

94. Allegations of civil and political rights violations by the armed groups and Ukrainian forces, including volunteer battalions, require independent investigation. All sides must conform to all human rights standards in the treatments of IDPs, including ensuring that they are free from arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and any ill-treatment. Equally, it is important to ensure freedom of movement and residence for IDPs, including their potential secure return to their places of origin.

Property rights

95. **Ownership of property should be retained, even for those unable or unwilling to return to the Autonomous Republic of Crimea or affected regions of eastern Ukraine. In such cases, the sale of their properties should be facilitated, on a voluntary basis and at market values. Those who wish to retain their property should be permitted to do so without risk of its unauthorized occupation, confiscation or sale. Where property has been damaged or destroyed, adequate compensation should be provided to owners by the appropriate authorities and within a reasonable time frame.**

Achieving durable solutions

96. **Consideration of relevant durable solution options must be included in national laws and policies for IDPs and addressed at the earliest possible stage. National and regional authorities should establish integrated planning informed by displacement dynamics and ensure that urban development and upgrading plans, as well as poverty reduction plans, include aspects specific to internal displacement. It is imperative that the authorities ensure full participation of IDPs in processes that address durable solutions, and undertake consultation with communities and neighbourhoods to address their broader concerns.**

97. **Ukraine is encouraged to learn from the experience of similar situations, including in the Balkans and Caucasus regions, where internal displacement has become protracted. It is vital to ensure that short-term or transitional solutions, for example regarding accommodation, do not become permanent. Lessons can be learned to help Ukraine put in place vital policies, frameworks, support structures and programmes to move towards a situation in which many IDPs can return safely to their homes or find alternative durable solutions.**

The role of the international community

98. **Responding appropriately to the current displacement situation is beyond the existing capacity and resources of the Government. The international community therefore has an important role in supporting the Government to fulfil its obligations, including through technical and advisory services and through financial assistance to the Government and United Nations agencies.**

99. **The international community is urged to enhance its financial and other assistance. Humanitarian assistance and essential projects to provide accommodation are amongst the urgent priorities. In regions affected by the armed conflict, projects to reconstruct or replace housing, restore water, electricity and other essential services are needed to enable IDPs to return to their homes.**

100. **The Special Rapporteur will continue his cooperation with the Government of Ukraine regarding issues related to the human rights of IDPs and, in that context, hopes to conduct a workshop with national and international partners at an appropriate opportunity.**